Title: Ecology and Survival: A Study in SelectIndian Novels in English and in Translation

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Registration No. VB-1733 of 2013-14

Date of Registration: 14.05.2013/14.05.2018

Synopsis

What I intend to highlight in this thesis is the impact of ecological change in postcolonial context. The novels chosen are Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* (*1978),* Mahasweta Devi's *Chotti Munda and His Arrow (1980)*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things (1997),* Amitav Ghosh's*The Hungry Tide (2005)*, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss (2006),* and Usha K.R.'s *Monkey Man (2010).*However, before undertaking my examination of the impact of ecological change in postcolonial context, I will underline how ecological change bears a connection to literature.

In this era of ecological change it is the duty of the writers to bring environmental justice through their writings to make the readers conscious of the impacts of their surroundings. Ecocriticism being a deliberately broad methodology is known by a number of other terms including "green (cultural) studies", "ecopoetics", and "environmental literary criticism". The early point of ecocritical theory may have been asserted with Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* (1973) that contributed to specific ideas of nature, the countryside, poverty, seasons and the city. A basic definition of ecocriticism is found in Glofelty's early anthology *The EcocriticismReader (1996)* that explains it as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. What ecocriticism mainly concentrates is how literature interacts with and participates in the entire ecosphere. Thus the possible relations between literature and nature are examined in respect of ecological concepts. Ecocriticism seeks to establish a common field between the human and non-human world to draw attention to how they can correlate with various ways, because our existence depends largely on the environment.

The proper concern of ecocriticism is how nature gets textualized in literary texts to create an eco-literary discourse that would help to construct an intertextual as well as an interactive approach between literary language and language of nature. In this respect, what William Rueckert calls, "literary ecology" finds out the means in which nature is marginalized or silenced. This viewpoint demonstrates that literary ecology is a projection of human thoughts about human responsibility to the natural environment. In this structure, ecocriticism offers an analysis of the cultural production of nature in terms of language, desire, knowledge and power. Ecocritics like Donna Haraway, Diana Fuss, Patrick Murphey and Evelyn Fox Keller reconceptualise nature as an active and speaking subject.

Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analysis clearly to a 'green' moral and political agenda. In this respect ecocriticism is intimately related to environmentally oriented

developments in philosophy and political theory. Expanding the insights of earlier critical movements, ecofeminists, social ecologists and environmental integrity advocate a search for a fusion of environmental and social concerns. In this respect Garrard also introduces to the term deep ecology which was coined by Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher in 1973. Deep ecology emphasises the role of the individual who is summoned to perform as a citizen of the World and Earth and to take responsibility for it. It is significant to see that this viewpoint involvesallthe features of human life and thought. The inspiring quality of such an attitude is massive. It is patriarchal ideology which separates humanity and nature and both deep ecology and ecofeminism have in common to bring union between them. As deep ecologists are eager to make a release from isolation / alienation, ecofeminists also bring a release from entire set of exploitations based on patriarchal domination. A group of ecofeminists argue that it is capitalist patriarchy which is responsible for repressive system of global power relations. Deep ecologists and ecofeminists place both environmentalism and women's struggle against the mechanical rationality and dehumanizing consumerist culture which is introduced with industrial production. In the agenda of deep ecology women's complicated identity as a sexual, reproductive, and labour resource is glossed over. The First world women as well as Third world women both involve themselves to mould the infrastructure of men's productive economic model. The inclusion of women's energies by the head of the family is same as the exploitative class are to suffer under the capitalist system. The root of ecofeminism lies in the social change movements of the 1970s like many other modern progressive activities. Ecofeminism, which starts with the works of Griffin, Daly, Ruther, Merchant and others in the 1970s, expands in academic spheres strikingly in the 1980s and 1990s. As activists in the ecology movements Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies feel that the impact of ecological catastrophe and deterioration on women is more harder than that on men, and it is women who always come first to protest against environmental degradation.

If the final outcome of the present world system is a general threat to life on planet earth, then it is crucial to resuscitate and nurture the impulse and determination to survive, inherent in all living things. A closer examination of the numerous local struggles against ecological destruction and deterioration confirmed that many women, worldwide, felt the same anger and anxiety, and the same sense of responsibility to preserve the bases of life, and to end its destruction. Irrespective of different racial, ethnic, cultural or class backgrounds, this common concern brought women together to forge links in solidarity with other women, people and even nations. They think that science and technology were not gender neutral but these connect same patriarchal violence which exists through the exploitative domination between man and nature, exploitative and tyrannical bond between men and women and aggressive progress of the modern industrial ones. The connection between feminism and ecology is emphasised from the separation of the human from the natural world.

Some ecofeminists think that it is patriarchal religion which separates human from nature. The origin of the oppression of nature is dated back to 4,500 BC, before the scientific revolution when goddess worshipping cultures is replaced to male deities. That time no gender disparity and divinity was seen as immanent. This patriarchal domination of both women and nature are divinely dominated. Others believe that human evolutionary development occurs from this patriarchal domination. What this theory of social human evolution suggests is that women

being smaller, weaker, and reproductive, are not able to participate in the hunt and banishes her in the land of non-culture.

Other ecofeminists separate culture from nature and they think that patriarchal culture describes the world in terms of self and other dualisms. In this hierarchy all things related to self are valued and all which are associated with other are devalued. In the structure of domination powerful self exists and the other is negated. These dualisms of self/other are manifested as culture/nature, man/woman, white/nonwhite, human/nonhuman, civilized/wild, heterosexual/homosexual, reason/emotion, wealthy/poor etc. It is difficult for some women particularly urban middle class women to perceive commonality both between their own liberation and liberation of nature and between themselves and different women in the world due to the patriarchal structure where "the one always considered superior, always thriving, and progressing at the expense of the other."

From the world viewpoint the 'other', the 'object' are treated not just as different but as the 'enemy'. In this consequent fight the inferior 'other' survives always being subordinated and appropriated by the superior part. This is also true for the idea of history and development according to Hegelian and Marxian dialectics. An antagonistic rule of life for a regular struggle for survival is applicable in evolution theory too. Depending on the primary insights of socialist feminist theories as well as the experiences of activists who were involved in the movements like peace, anti-nuclear, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, environmental and anti-liberation, a historical, contextualized, inclusive approach is provided by the ecofeminists to solve these problems. Ecofeminists believe that ideologies of racism, sexism, classicism, imperialism, naturism and speciesism occur due to current global crises. In spite of their remote state these ideologies according to ecofeminists intersect one another to bring about complex systems of oppression. Different ecofeminists accept the term ecofeminism in different ways An ecofeminist perspective propounds the need for a new cosmology and new anthropology which recognizes that life in nature (which includes human beings) is maintained by means of co-operation, and mutual care and love. Only in this way can we be enabled to respect and preserve the diversity of all life forms, including their cultural expressions, as true sources of our well-being and happiness. To this end ecofeminists use metaphors like 're-weaving the world', 'healing the wounds', and re-connecting and interconnecting the' web'. This effort to create a holistic, all-life embracing cosmology and anthropology, must necessarily imply a concept of freedom different form that used since the Enlightenment.

Asserting all connected forms and structures of oppression ecofeminism is obliged to address their entirety where classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, naturism and speciecism are all entangled with it being formed out of the power dynamics of patriarchal systems. Domination of the natural world and oppression of women by the patriarchal structures must be treated together. Ecofeminism being multi-featured and multi-located confronts structures rather than individuals and widens the span of the cultural assessment and includes apparently distinct but drastically linked elements.

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